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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Identical letters dated 8 April 2009 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, continues to be extremely volatile due to the illegal, aggressive, destructive and provocative policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power. In this regard, I must draw your attention specifically to the ongoing acts of violence and terror being perpetrated against the Palestinian civilian population by Israeli settlers, illegally transferred to the Occupied Territory and clearly constituting part of the occupying force.

The most recent incident involves an attack today by armed Israeli settlers from the illegal settlement of "Beit Ein", who went on a rampage against Palestinian civilians in the village of Khirbat Safa, north of Al-Khalil (Hebron). The early morning attack, during which settlers fired indiscriminately on Palestinian homes and civilians, left at least 38 Palestinians injured, including one critically, Tha'er Nasser Aadi, 18 years old, who is now in hospital struggling for his life after being shot in the neck.

Similar to previous such terror attacks, this rampage was perpetrated under the protection of the Israeli occupying soldiers, who only intervened to guarantee the safe return of the assailants to their illegal settlement. Indeed, instead of providing protection for the safety and well-being of the civilian population in Khirbat Safa, as the occupying Power is obligated to do under international humanitarian law, the occupying forces allowed this attack to be carried out and even participated in it, firing live ammunition, tear gas and rubber-coated steel bullets at the civilians. Moreover, the occupying forces proceeded to seize eight Palestinian homes in Khirbat Safa and Beit Umar to use as military outposts.

While the situation with the illegal Israeli settlers has been consistently volatile and dangerous in and around the area of Al-Khalil, numerous such incidents are occurring regularly across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. Today, in a shocking display of extremism, hundreds of

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fanatical Israeli settlers descended upon the Old City, including onto Al-Haram Al-Sharif, confronting and injuring several Palestinians and threatening further attacks on Muslim holy places. This was preceded by other incidents in Occupied East Jerusalem, where illegal Israeli settlers, backed by soldiers, attacked Palestinians in the Sa'diyya neighbourhood on 4 April 2009, injuring several civilians. That attack was followed by an invasion by a terrorist settler group of the home of the Jabir family, which evicted the family and seized the home by force.

In this regard, it is imperative to note that the escalation of settler violence and terror is occurring in tandem with escalating illegal settlement construction and expansion as well as the intensification of all other illegal colonization measures, including the construction of the Wall, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The situation is most severe in areas in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, where Israel, the occupying Power, has been feverishly carrying out illegal activities and measures for the direct purpose of altering the demographic composition, character and legal status of the city, including by de-populating the city of its Palestinian inhabitants through forced evictions, home demolitions and other means and measures intended to make it nearly impossible and totally unbearable for them to continue living there, thus advancing the city's Judaization and entrenching its illegal control of it. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the continuation and intensification of all of these illegal activities, which are seriously destabilizing the situation on the ground, inflaming tensions between the two sides and jeopardizing any prospects for physically realizing the two-State solution for peace.

Israel's illegal settlement colonization campaign and the settlers residing within the settlements are funded, protected, and armed by the Israeli government, which has transferred and enabled them to live in these illegal settlements in grave breach of international law, including in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and which allows them to commit such crimes against defenceless Palestinians throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory with absolute impunity. The lawlessness of the settlers, including deadly violence, terror, harassment and intimidation against Palestinian civilians and their properties, is facilitated, aided and abetted by the occupying Power, which bears full responsibility for the illegal presence and all the illegal actions of the settlers.

The provisions and principles of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, are clear in this regard. Israel, the occupying Power, must be demanded to cease its illegal colonization campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and comply scrupulously with all of its legal obligations in this regard, particularly under the Fourth Geneva Convention. It must also act forthwith to reign in and bring an end to the terror campaign being perpetrated by the Israeli settlers against the Palestinian civilian population under occupation.

Continuation of the current unjust, illegal situation will only further exacerbate the tense situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, further stoking anger and rage, deepening mistrust and further endangering the dwindling prospects for a peaceful settlement of this conflict. This explosive situation thus requires urgent attention and serious action by the international community, including by the Security Council in accordance with its responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, for the future potential for peace and security demand that such core issues be immediately and thoroughly addressed.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 336 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 6 March 2009 (A/ES-10/451-S/2009/130), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer